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Ontario Medal for Good Citizenship

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“A good citizen is a person who
does not live for himself or herself alone.”

William G. Davis, Premier, June 14, 1973

Ontario Medal for Good Citizenship

On June 14, 1973, Premier William G. Davis announced to the Ontario Legislature the creation of the "Ontario Medal for Good Citizenship" as part of a new government undertaking designed to recognize outstanding contributions from all areas of Ontario society.

The following is an excerpt from Premier Davis' speech, announcing the new award.

The cornerstone of the new award will be the concept of citizenship, which has been defined as the quality of an individual's response to membership in a community. A good citizen has also been defined as a person who does not live for himself or herself alone, and this is the attribute that the government intends to honour and commemorate.

In a society as complex and interdependent as ours, it is important, and I think timely, that we recognize the force for good exerted by many of our fellow citizens doing things that are generous and useful – simply because they themselves feel they should.

The new Ontario Medal for Good Citizenship will be a means of affording this recognition and tribute to these citizens who, through their selflessness, humanity and kindness make this a better province in which to live.

The medal, designed by Toronto sculptor Gerald Gladstone, is a round silver disc that has the Ontario coat of arms engraved on one side, and a trillium, Ontario's official flower, on the other. The ribbon of the medal, in green, white, and gold, bears the colours of the trillium.

Advisory Council

An eight-member advisory council has been established to select possible recipients of the medal. Honorary Chairman of the Advisory Council is the Honourable Pauline McGibbon, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario.

Advisory Committee members are:

Arnold H. Agnew, General Manager, Marketing and Public Relations, Toronto Dominion Bank, former Vice-President and Editor-in-Chief of the *Telegram*

Dr. E. Harry Botterell, Professor of Surgical Neurology and Special Adviser to the Principal of Health Sciences, Queen's University, Kingston

Mrs. J.J. Casey, Tillsonburg housewife, former director of the Volunteer Centre of Metropolitan Toronto

Ralph Douglas, Personnel Manager, Canadian General Electric Company Limited, Toronto

Mrs. Joan King, housewife and mother of four children, married to Dr. Michael King, general practitioner at Englehart

Horace Krever, barrister and Professor of Law, the University of Toronto

Shaun MacGrath, former publisher and General Manager of the *Catholic Register* and former independent public relations consultant in Toronto (Mr. MacGrath is the council chairman.)

William H. Taylor, Secretary-Manager, Ontario Weekly Newspaper Association

The Recipients

Four women and six men of varying backgrounds and lifestyles were selected to receive the Ontario Medal for Good Citizenship this year.

The ten recipients received their medals from Lieutenant Governor Pauline McGibbon at an investiture ceremony held at Queen's Park on June 30. The ten award winners were further honoured when they were presented to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, during the July 1 celebrations at the Legislative Building.

The eight-member advisory council chose the ten for their outstanding contribution to the life of their communities and for their selfless dedication to the welfare of their fellow citizens.



Although blind, Wilson Brooks of Dunnville is actively involved in programs for senior citizens of the area.

In addition to playing the organ and conducting a rhythm band, Mr. Brooks is in charge of musical programs for senior citizens. School bands and orchestras, barbershop quartets, and choral groups are just some of the attractions he has brought to Grandview Lodge to entertain the 220 residents and other senior citizens.

As one of his goals is to get senior citizens involved in outside activities, Mr. Brooks also arranges trips to other lodges for the residents of Grandview.

Mr. Brooks' first love is playing the organ, a pastime he can indulge in at leisure as he is the proud owner of an organ given to him by the people of the community.



Stephen Choma of Belleville is the founder of the Eastern Ontario Concert Orchestra, a non-professional orchestra that has been in existence for thirteen years.

The 55-member group, comprised of housewives, students, and businessmen, brings entertainment to small communities, provides an outlet for people who wish to play an instrument, and raises money for service club charities.

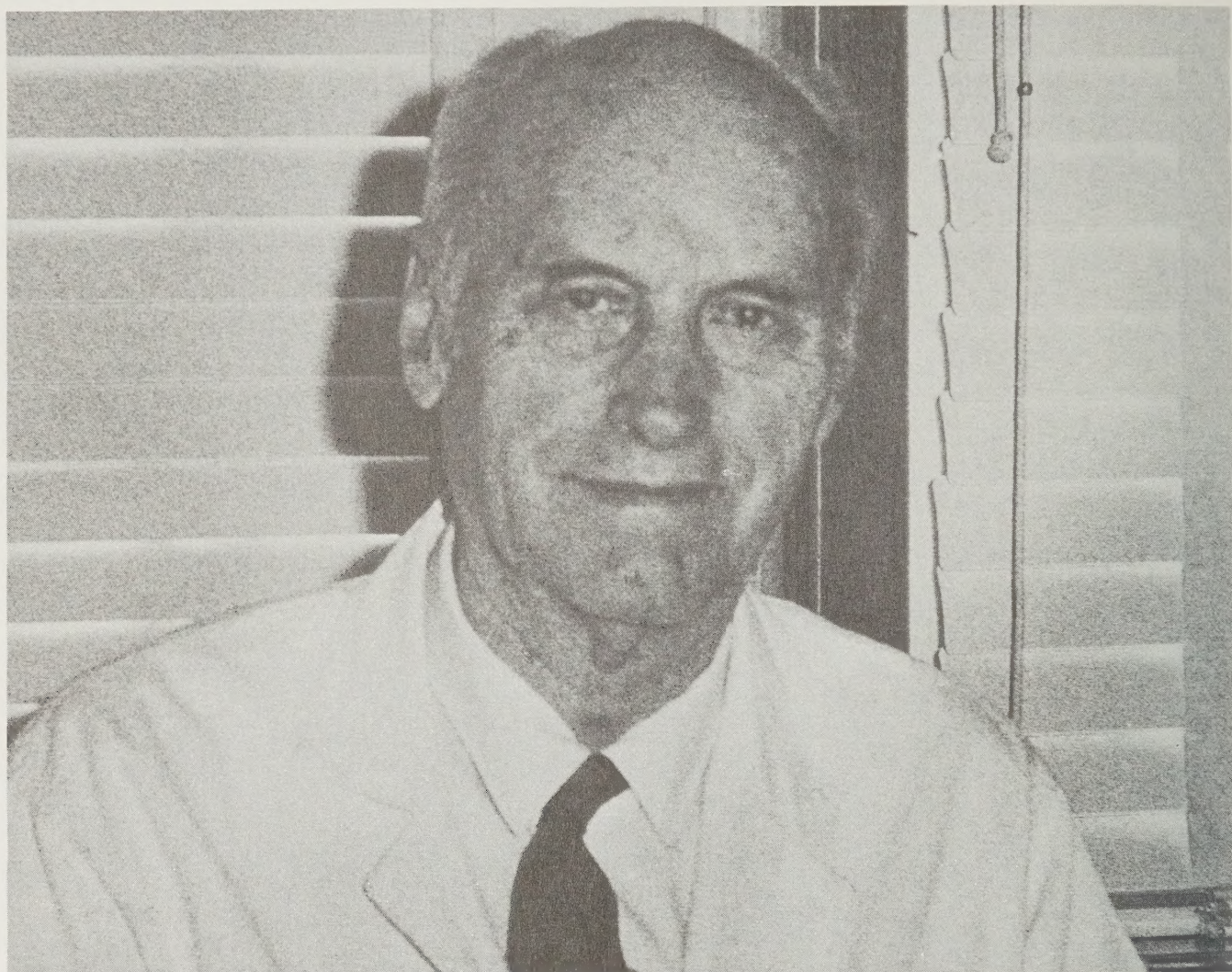
The orchestra, whose renditions range from classical music to 'Boston Pops' and contemporary jazz, also plays for church and senior citizen groups in nearby communities.



Ralph Finkle of Clarkson is one of the founders and president of the Canadian Medic Alert Association.

When Mr. Finkle read about Medic Alert in a United States publication, he decided that people in Canada should carry a similar device to alert others to hidden medical problems. He himself wears a Medic Alert bracelet to indicate an allergy to penicillin.

Under the direction of Dr. Marion Collins, who invented the Medic Alert bracelet, he established the first Canadian Medic Alert association. The non-profit organization has a Canadian membership of 115,000.



Dr. Ford Goodfellow of Westport, near Brockville, was the area's only doctor for forty-two years. He came to the area during the Depression and in the early years performed all the obstetrics in his home. Dr. Goodfellow is still practising today.

In the early 1930's he started the local library, after canvassing throughout the district and allaying the fears of those who thought that the provision of a library would raise their taxes.

In 1959, he also founded the Rideau District Historical Society. His work in this connection eventually led to the establishment of the district museum in 1961.

Motivated by a concern for senior citizens, Dr. Goodfellow organized a drive for senior citizens' housing; at present, twenty-one units are under construction.



Jean McCann of Barrie, convenor of citizenship and immigration for the Toronto Archdiocesan Council of the Catholic Women's League, actively recruits citizens to work with volunteer groups such as the Inter-Faith Association, which is an organization set up by all the churches in Canada.

During the 1950's she served as parish immigration convenor in Barrie and later went on to become regional immigration officer for the Catholic Women's League.

In the course of the Ugandan refugee program, she set up a 'mini Ontario Welcome House' in a Barrie church and helped refugees find employment, housing, clothing, and friends.

Over the years she has helped many new Canadians settle in Barrie.



Viola McCarthy of Deep River was the community's only means of mail delivery for thirty-six years. Her route consisted of 683 homes and covered a 48-mile radius. In addition to doing all her own sorting, she has, over the years, acted as a bread delivery service, midwife, and temporary taxi service.

In the early days she delivered the mail by horse and buggy during the summer, and by horse and cutter in the winter months.

Viola McCarthy is not exactly unfamiliar with medals. She was awarded a silver medal for her twenty-six years of service with the Post Office, and in 1967 received a Centennial Medal for valuable service to her community.



Leslie McKerral, a Woodstock barber, has worked with handicapped children for forty years.

He is a co-founder of the Oxford County Retarded Children's Association and has served as chairman of its board of governors. Established twenty-six years ago, the association has trained hundreds of handicapped children in a wide range of crafts through its sheltered workshop program.

As chairman of the association's building committee, Mr. McKerral spearheaded a campaign that eventually led to the construction of a permanent residence for thirty retarded children. He has also been successful in winning the assistance of the Woodstock Rotary Club in building a school for the retarded children.

In addition to his work with retarded children, Mr. McKerral arranges entertainment programs for the patients at Woodstock's Mental Health Centre.



Catherine Schumilas of St. Agatha, near Kitchener, is noted for her work with mentally retarded children and is the founder of the Women's Auxiliary of the Margaret McDonald Home for the Handicapped.

From a modest start ten years ago, the McDonald home has grown to include a school, where Mrs. Schumilas teaches, a playground, and a heated swimming pool.

Mrs. Schumilas said her work grew out of her concern for the living conditions of mentally retarded children. She has also written a history book on St. Agatha, and designed a series of books, entitled *Quietly Do*, which teach handicapped students manipulative skills, such as hand-eye co-ordination, depth perception, time concept, and mathematics. The books are used in schools all over Canada.



Gus Ryder, Canada's Man of the Year in 1963, is an internationally known swimming coach who spends much of his time teaching water safety to the handicapped.

His interest in water safety began at sixteen years of age when he fell through the ice on Grenadier Pond in Toronto and was trapped for a short time.

Although best known as the man who coached swimmers Marilyn Bell and Cliff Lumsdon, it is his work with handicapped children that brings him the Ontario Medal. He has taught swimming to handicapped and retarded children for forty-five years.

Mr. Ryder, 75, still swims three times a week.



Peggy Ann Walpole of Toronto is the founder and executive director of Street Haven at the Crossroads. Street Haven, established in 1965, is a half-way house for women who have been in trouble with the law.

A few years after its establishment, Street Haven moved to larger quarters, an eleven-room house supported by the Addiction Research Foundation and the United Church.

The Haven deals with drug addicts, alcoholics, and transients needing a place to stay. The centre, staffed by forty-one volunteers, helps women get established through a variety of programs.

Miss Walpole, a registered nurse, has also done volunteer work with St. Maria Half-way House and the Don Jail.

Winners of the 1973 Ontario Medal for Good Citizenship

Father Wilfred Dumont, an Oblate Missionary who ministers to the Indians in the Keewatin La Pas Diocese in Northwestern Ontario

Mary Sereda of Thunder Bay, who participates in public life from a motorized wheelchair and presides over the Happy Handicapped Club

Peter Ramsay, a Madoc resident who, though crippled from birth by polio, manages a hockey team that includes boys who are deaf and mute as well as others not fortunate enough to be accepted on other teams in the area

Pansy Forbes, a Peterborough widow in her 70's, who began a special swimming program for mentally retarded girls in 1956

Jenny Feick, a Kitchener student who organized a group of volunteers that became known as the "Conscience" of the Kitchener-Waterloo area due to the awareness they have created with regard to environmental cleanup and recycling

Norman Mitchinson, who gave up his electrical business in Niagara Falls to devote himself full-time to combatting pollution and improving the environment

Nominations

The aim of the Ontario Medal for Good Citizenship program is to highlight the positive ways in which many citizens participate in our provincial community. By so doing, it hopes to strengthen their contribution to Ontario society, a contribution that effects a vital, but often imperceptible, improvement in the quality of life of that society.

By making the selfless or inspirational actions of a few citizens more widely known to their fellows – through press coverage of their awards and by publication of a yearly booklet for use in schools which outlines each recipient's contribution to society – this goal will perhaps be achieved.

Persons wishing to submit nominations for the Ontario Medal for Good Citizenship may obtain a nomination form by writing to the following address:

The Secretary
Advisory Council
Ontario Medal for Good Citizenship
Room 261, Legislative Building
Queen's Park
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1A1

